

### ***Mme. Kollontay***

So Alexandra Mikhailovna Kollontay is dead—the woman of the Russian revolution who, in the evening of her life, used to give Ambassador Bedell Smith some useful information about Soviet purposes and events in Russia. Whether she was as disillusioned as Litvinov was—that appears uncertain. Perhaps we shall never know. Sufficient that she had a remarkable career and a brilliant mind. Her last post was as Soviet envoy to Stockholm, and it was her intermediation that ended the so-called winter war in 1939-40 between Soviet Russia and Finland. She sought to bring the war to an end before the Russians had demonstrated their superiority, but the Finns, as stubborn as well as a great people, refused to negotiate. Eventually, when the Mannerheim line broke under the Russian weight, they took advantage of Madame Kollontay's services, and the war was brought to a conclusion without too much indemnification.

There is a lesson in that war for the Mac-Arthurs who talk so foolishly about fighting wars to total victory and unconditional surrender—perhaps the most destructive idea of our time. Wars ought to be fought in behalf of a specific aim; if such an aim is absent, and only victory is sought, wars become plain futile murder. In the Finnish war the Russians, though guilty of unprovoked and brutal, even barbaric, aggression, had a specific war aim, and fought for it. The war aim, basically, was to make the Gulf of Finland a Russian lake. They did not want to rub the Finnish nose in ignominy and defeat, or anything as non-specific as that. Hence the Kollontay intercession. It was this way that the Russo-Western conflict over Berlin was handled, and the policy is just as sound in the case of Korea.